SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: If they have not agreed, you take up special mentions.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. KAUSHIK): All right. I have no option. We will take up special mention first.

REFERENCE TO THE LOSS OF EYE-SIGHT FOLLOWING OPERATIONS PERFORMED IN KHURJA AND MORADABAD

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to mention a matter of urgent public importance with regard to losing eyesight following operations of cataract and others, which were performed in the eye camps in Khurja and Moradabad. I have something to say about the press, in the first instance. The original reports were quite frightening. The final report has now established that 84 out of 88 operations in Khurja have failed and people lost their eyesight. The alarming news of 300 out of 400 losing eyesinght at the eye-camp organised at Moradabad is happily not true, and I am really wondering as to how the press does not take care and pay more attention as it is causing such a great panic when it is said that 300 out of 400 lost their eyesight. Actually, only five persons lost eyesight.

However, Sir, it is an important matter which really calls for my mentioning it and I draw the urgent attention of the Minister concerned.

Sir, all these people who had gone to the eye-camp in the hope of seeing light have gone home totally blind, permanently blind and in total and permanent darkness. Very rarely hope turns into despair so soon and in such proportion. Sir, eye-camps have come to stay in our country. I have known of eye-camps eversince I was a child. Those days, Dr. Sardesai, a well known opthalmic surgeon conducted these camps and this was called 'Netra Yagna' where patients could be operated and treated successfully. Dr. Mehra of Sitapur Eye Hospital was likewise doing it with great success. And there were no complaints. Even today, several institutes are conducting eye camps. Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Trust, for example, I have not know these camps being great work. But the point I want to make is that there are certain periods for conducting these eye camps. For example, I have not known these camps bring conducted either in hot months or monsoon months. I have got some literature with me from Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Trust which says 'please conduct your eye camps only in the months of February March that is, cold months. Therefore draw the Minister's attention to see that these camps are not held during hot and monsoon months.

The second point which I want to say is....

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): Special mention is confined to three minutes. (*Interruptions*). I am only requesting the Chair.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu): Don't take guillotine in your hand.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: It is a very important subject; people are suffering. Sir, today holding of these camps is entirely done through private agencies. I hope some sort of supervision by public or governmental agencies is necessary. Whenever a camp is held, notice should be given to public authority who should send their team to supervise because ultimately we are dealing with human suffering.

I am mentioning all this because the campaign of eye-camps should grow; it should not get a set-back. One of the causes of blindness is spurious saline which was manufactured, as per reports, as it was done in regard to Hoffkine vaccine for the polio for the children. I think

this element of spurious drugs should be very seriously dealt with. I therefore, draw the attention of the Government to these two important aspects.

REFERENCE TO THE NEED TO WITHDRAW FREIGHT EQUALISATION SCHEME IN RESPECT OF INDUSTRIAL COMMODITIES

SHRI CHITTA BASU (West Bengal): I draw the attention of the House and of the Government to a very important issue of Freight Equalisation policy. The national Transport Policy Committee, under the Chairmanship of Shri B. D. Pande, in their report submitted to the Government, in 1980, recommended that the freight equalisation scheme in respect of industrial commodities like steel should be gradually phased out, since it has not served the objective of regional development but has led to the non-optimal location of industries. The Government of India have accepted this recommendation in principle. In line with this recommendation, the Government also decided that the subsidisation of transport cost in the case of remote, inaccessible and isolated areas like the North-Eastern Region should be continued. Sir, in reply to Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 736 dated the 30th July, 1985, it was stated by Shri K. Natwar Singh, the then Minister of State in the Department of Steel, that the modalities and the time-phasing of the withdrawal of the freight equalisation scheme were being worked out in consultation with the Ministries concerned. It was stated that the modalities would be worked out within three months. This is very important. 'Within three months'. The period of three months ended on the 29th October, 1985. The period was further extended by another three months, up to 29th January, 1986. In reply to Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 997, on the 26th November, 1985, it was stated that the modalities and the time-phasing of the withdrawal were still to be worked out. In reply to Rajya Sabha Starred question 292 on the 14th March, 1986, the Minister of Steel and Mines said and I quote:

"A number of representations have been received from States located farther away from steel plants against phasing out of the freight equalisation scheme in respect of iron and steel. These views will be taken into account while working out the modalities."

Then, Sir, the Prime Minister is reported to have assured representatives of the Chambers of Commerce and trade union representatives at Calcutta only on the 1st July this year, that they would examine the question and expedite the decision. Sir, in view of all these facts—I do not want to quote other facts—this should be accepted as an assurance given by the Minister to the House. This should not be treated merely as an information. According to me, this is not a mere information. As I said earlier, this constitutes a definite, concise and precise assurance. Therefore, this assurance has to be implemented. Sir, I demand, a statement, on behalf of the Government, should be made in the House to explain the position, as to how and when this decision of the Government would be implemented.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. KAUSHIK): Shri Vishvajit Prithvijit Singh. He is not here. Shri Satya Prakash Malaviya. He is not here. Shri Thangabaalu.

REFERENCE TO THE CAUVERY WATER DISPUTE

SHRI THANGABAALU (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, with your permission, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government a matter of urgent public importance, through this august House. Sir, for the last sixteen years, there have been discussions and meetings in regard to the Cauvery water dispute, between the States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. Now, the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala met last month and they decided after the meeting that the talks had failed and that there was no other way out for them but to refer the question to the Centre and accept its verdict. At this juncture, I would like to point out, as per the 1924 agreement, Tamil Nadu has to get 40,000 crore cubic feet of water yearly. *(Interruptions)*